

THE
Counterfeit Constable,
OR,
THE WICKED
WATCH:
BEING

A Full and Perfect Relation how
some Persons pretending them-
selves to be a Constable and his
Watch, did enter into several
Houses, and rob'd the people of great
Sums of Money and Goods.

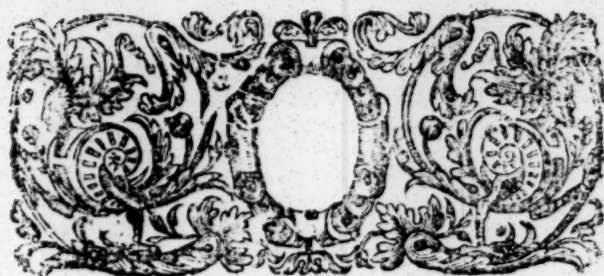
As also how the said Persons were at last Apprehended,
and after a long time remaining in Goal, sentenced the
last Sessions to dye, but notwithstanding, by the en-
deavours of friends, a Reprieve was granted, and they
brought back from *Lilorn*, the 6th. of *March*, 1674.

Containing an exact account of their Facts and Tryals.

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T H E
Counterfeit CONSTABLE:
Or, The
Wicked WATCH:

TOO truly was it said more than fifteen hundred years ago by *Horace* Prince of the *Lyrick* Poets,

*Ætas Parentum, peior avis
Nos Genuit, mox Daturus
Progeniem vitiosior em.*

“Our Fathers who more wicked methods trace,
“Than did our Grandfathers halfe on a pace,
“For to get us a yet more wicked Race.

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Though Sciences may be in the wane, & most good Arts Dwinling away by a Retrograde motion, whilst each modern Author proves only an Eccho to the Ancients, and from their rich Store-house of Learning pilfers a few scraps and superficial besprinklings of knowledge to gain himself the reputation of an Ingenioso; yet Villany still improves it self to a higher pitch, and people grow every day more subtle and witty in the contrivance of Roguery, so as to condemn the dull common tricks of their Predecessors in the mystery of Iniquity, and invent continually fresh Stratagems to accomplish their designed Cheats and Robberies.

Of this, without turning over Chronicles, or searching the musty Records of Antiquity, or (what is more poor) fobbing the Reader with an idle Romantick Story, where the Scene is laid in some remote and unknown Country, to make it easier to be believed than disproved, our present Subject affords us at home an unhappy Instance.

A jolly Gang of the Town, who lived like birds of prey, or people in that State of Nature, which some idle Phylosophers have of late recommended so far, as to juggle out of credit the notions of good and evil, and those pedantique terms, *Meum* and *Tuum*; having a fancy to drive their Trade in these dead times) to the best advantage, and make themselves Masters of what they could get, concluded there was no safer way to accomplish their designs, than to Masque themselves in the mantle of Authority, hoping they might so unexpectedly commit the greatest outrages with Indemnity, since it passed under the semblance of a warrantable and securing Office.

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To this purpose they dress up a principal and well experienced member of their Fraternity, in his Gown, Cap, Staff, and all the formalities of a Constable, the rest being put into a suitable Garb, and reverently attending him as his Watchmen.

In this posture they set out about Ten or Eleven a Clock in the Night, and pass in their rambling progress several Watches, giving and receiving the usual complement, *Good Night Brother*, to the Constables.

This company knocking furiously, as with authority, at a private house door, they commanded the people to rise and open the Door, which being done, they pretend a Warrant which they had ready contrived with the Name of a Justice of Peace, and his Seal Counterfeited to it; To Inquire and apprehend if they could, certain persons therein named and mentioned, as Clippers of Money; Whereupon the People well knowing their Innocency from harbouring any people of that stamp, admitted them very freely to search; But they pretending though the persons were not then present, they ought to make diligent scrutiny for brass and Clipp'd Money, claimed a Privilege of opening all Closets, Chests, Drawers, and Trunks: VWhere
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at last happening to find fifty seven pound and odd Money, they picking out thereof three or four narrow Clipp'd Shillings, took the Confidence to acquaint the Folks that they must seize all the said Money for the Kings use, till further Order; VWhereupon the same was deposited in the pretended Constables hands, who pretendedly gave them a very fair account of his Name and dwelling, which they seeing him thus attended never suspected to be false.

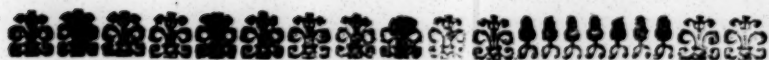
Having in their first enterprize of this nature sped thus successfully and dispatch'd away some of their Confederates to Lodge the prize; they march on and give the alarm to an Ale-house, which soon surrendred and gave entrance at the sight of the Staff and Halberts: Here they pretend to search for stolen plate, and under that pretence carried away all the plate they could find in the house, leaving another name and dwelling for the owner to enquire at for it. This particular booty was worth above twenty pound.

Now going farther, they steer their course to an Eminent Shop-keepers House, make them rise, and pretend they come to search for *French* prohibited goods: under which notion they disburden his Shop and Ware-house of above one hundred pounds worth of Commodities. But this Gentleman sinoking the cheat when they went forth, at first Doggs them, then gets afore them, and causes the Watch to stop them: In which Confusion some made their escape; but the counterfeit Constable, and several of his pretended Watch were apprehended,

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ed, and being carried before a Justice of Peace committed to *Newgate*; where having fenced with the Law for three or four Sessions. At last, *Viz.* The last Week of *February* last past, the said Offenders were Condemned to dye, but notwithstanding, by the Endeavours of Friends, a reprieve was granted, and they brought back from *Tyburn* on the 6th. of this Instant *March*, 1673.

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FINIS.

